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26 MAR 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the Director
Executive Secretary
Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence Community
Deputy to the DCI for National Intelligence Officers
Deputy Director for Operations
Deputy Director for Intelligence
Deputy Director for Management and Services
Deputy Director for Science and Technology
General Counsel
Legislative Counsel
Comptroller

SUBJECT : Watergate - Agency File Review

1. This memorandum relates to the Director's request for a review of Agency files for material connected in any way with what has come to be called "Watergate." At a recent morning meeting, I mentioned that we were preparing guidelines to assist you in carrying out the review within your areas of jurisdiction. The guidelines are now completed, and a copy is attached hereto. The target date set for completion of the review is 10 May 1974.

2. We have devoted much time to consideration of various possible ways in which a review of Agency files might be conducted, and we are convinced that a complete file review, regardless of how conducted, would still not provide absolute assurance against future "surprises." The guidelines we have prepared call for a somewhat selective rather than a comprehensive review.

a. A simple cursory review of all files would likely be of little substantive worth. It would enable the Agency to state that all files have been reviewed; but such a statement would only make more embarrassing any subsequent "discovery."

b. On the other hand, a thorough review of all Agency files would require a truly massive effort extending over a lengthy period of time, involving hundreds of man-years. The

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term "Watergate" has come to cover to one extent or another a wide range of topics, events, and personalities, including much historical data. As the Watergate story has unfolded, there has been instance after instance in which a seemingly innocuous item has acquired relevance and significance because of its relation to something else turned up in CIA or elsewhere. For this reason alone, a complete review of all Agency holdings today would not provide a guarantee against new "surprises" tomorrow.

3. The file review which will be necessary in each of your areas of responsibility, even though it can be described as a selective review, will require a large amount of effort and time. It would be totally beyond the abilities of my staff to do all the reviewing. Most of the reviewing and most of the decision-making in connection with it will have to be done in your components and under your management. I and my staff will assist where we can. I suggest that you put someone in charge of the review effort in your area and have him make arrangements with [REDACTED] of my staff (ext. 4470) for a discussion on "Watergate" and its various aspects and on what is expected in the file review.

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4. The guidelines which we have prepared are not as specific as we would like to make them. The fact is, however, that "Watergate" does not have a precise definition.

5. It should be borne in mind that much information about the Agency and Agency activities resides in the minds and memories of Agency employees. Along with the file review, therefore, the memories of Agency personnel must be jogged as part of the effort to ensure that anything relevant which has not been reported previously be reported now.

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[REDACTED]
Donald F. Chamberlain
Inspector General

Attachment a/s